

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN INTERIM – 2014/2015

# MINISTER'S FOREWORD



It is critical that Victoria's emergency management departments and agencies work with the community, government, not for profit and business sector in preparing for, responding to and recovering from major emergencies.

Our fire agencies and emergency management partners have made significant progress in achieving a more integrated and collaborative approach to emergency management. This was clearly demonstrated during the 2013/14 fire season.

The establishment of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), and the role of the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) from July 1, 2014, provides the legislated mandate to build a sustainable emergency management system that adopts an "all hazards, all agencies" approach and ultimately reduces and mitigates the impact of emergencies on our communities.

This is a critical change in Victoria's emergency management arrangements. The Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is intended to drive the emergency management reform agenda, to set priorities, assist government in investment decision-making, and drive further integration to deliver improved community-centric emergency management outcomes.

The three-year rolling Strategic Action Plan will be in place by 2015 and will maintain a strategic focus on strengthening Victoria's emergency management capability under three key themes of Risk and Resilience, Capability and Response, and Relief and Recovery.

This Interim Plan builds a one-year bridge between the Strategic Action Plan and the Fire Services Reform Action Plan (FSRAP), which since 2010 has focussed on improving the capacity of the fire agencies to operate together, to ensure the momentum for change and the work already undertaken in the sector is not lost.

Key initiatives from the FSRAP will migrate into the Strategic Action Plan, as well as priorities identified in the Victoria Emergency Management Reform: White Paper (2012) and reports such as the Review of the 2010/11 Flood Warnings and Response (2011) and the Victorian Auditor General's reports on Flood Relief and Recovery (2013) and Managing Emergency Services Volunteers (2014).

The Interim Strategic Action Plan focuses on actions to be delivered in 2014/15 that will set the foundations for priorities going forward. The full Strategic Action Plan will have a longer-term focus and be developed through extensive consultation in the coming year to inform priority areas for action.

With a clear strategy for investment, capability and the framework to manage change, we will be able to successfully deliver more integrated and efficient emergency management. Delivering this strategy will translate into greater public safety and better community outcomes.

As required under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, my colleagues of the Security and Emergencies Committee of Cabinet (SECC) and I have been involved in the development of the Interim SAP and will be working closely to ensure the creation of a more sustainable emergency management system in Victoria. It gives me great pleasure to release this Plan, which heralds a new era in emergency management.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kim Wells'.

**Hon Kim Wells MP**  
**Minister for Police and**  
**Emergency Services**  
**Minister for Bushfire Response**

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## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACT 2013

Under section 12 of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) must develop a three year rolling Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan for approval by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The Strategic Action Plan will serve as a vehicle to drive the Victorian Government's emergency management reform agenda, set priorities, and assist in determining investment decisions.

SCRC will consult with each of the responder agencies to develop the Strategic Action Plan, which includes a work program for each agency. The responder agencies are the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), Victoria State Emergency Service (VicSES), and the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA).

The Plan will be published on Emergency Management Victoria's website.

## THE FIRE SERVICES REFORM ACTION PLAN

The Fire Services Reform Action Plan (FSRAP) was a legislated requirement under the *Fire Services Commissioner Act 2010*. Its primary aim was to enhance the operational capacity and capability of the fire service agencies, and to focus on improving the capacity of these agencies to operate together in planning and preparing for and responding to, major fires.

Upon its commencement, the *Emergency Management Act 2013* repealed the *Fire Services Commissioner Act 2010* and with it the requirement to develop the FSRAP.



## FSRAP AND THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan focuses on reforming emergency management across the whole of government, not only within the fire services. It broadens the focus of reform beyond response and the traditional 'first responder' agencies.

This aligns with the objectives of the *Emergency Management Act* to:

- Foster a sustainable and efficient emergency management system that minimises the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies
- Establish efficient governance arrangements
- Implement an 'all hazards – all agencies' approach based on networked arrangements and greater interoperability.

Emergency services have always focused on responding to an event, such as putting out fires, search and rescue, emergency medical services, temporary shelter and catering and restoring services to communities.

Emergency management is much broader and includes:

- mitigation to prevent or lessen the impact of emergencies, for example by controlling development on flood plains and bushfire-prone areas and educating the community about their environment
- emergency preparedness through planning, exercising and training
- a coordinated and networked response across all levels of government and non-government organisations
- recovery that not only restores the necessary services and facilities, but better supports the restoration of social, built, natural and economic environments, and the health, well-being and long term recovery of communities.

A key principle of emergency management is acknowledging that there is significant work required across government, business and the community to mitigate, prepare for and recover from emergencies in addition to relying on the responders when an event occurs.

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The three-year rolling Strategic Action Plan will be in place in 2015 and will maintain a strategic focus on strengthening Victoria's emergency management capability under three key themes:

- Risk and Resilience
- Response and Capability
- Relief and Recovery.

To bridge the gap between the conclusion of the FSRAP and the implementation of the full Strategic Action Plan, the SCRC has developed an Interim Strategic Action Plan to maintain the momentum and sustain the benefits of the work done to date. Key initiatives from the FSRAP will migrate into the Strategic Action Plan as well as priorities identified in the Victoria Emergency Management Reform: White Paper (2012) (the White Paper) and other reports such as the Review of the 2010/11 Flood Warnings and Response (2011) by Neil Comrie AO, APM, and the Victorian Auditor General's reports on Flood Relief and Recovery (2013) and Managing Emergency Services Volunteers (2014).

The Interim Strategic Action Plan focuses on actions for delivery in 2014/15. These actions will see the conclusion to some of the FSRAP initiatives and set the foundation for other priorities into the future. The full Strategic Action Plan will have a longer-term focus. It will be developed over the coming year through extensive consultation across departments and agencies and involve assessing our planning, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for major hazards related risks to inform priority areas for action.

The Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan is a sector-wide plan. It will involve the resources and focus of all agencies and departments to deliver outcomes. Emergency Management Victoria, like other departments and agencies, will draw on the Strategic Action Plan to define priorities in its business planning.

### Monitoring and Reporting

The Act requires SCRC to report regularly to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on the progress made against the actions stipulated in the Plan.



## **Interim Strategic Action Plan - Priority Projects and Actions**

The Interim Strategic Action Plan includes priority projects and actions drawn from the FSRAP, the White Paper, the 2010/11 Flood Warnings and Response, and reports from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO).

Those projects which have migrated from the FSRAP to enable the completion of work already underway include the Common Risk Management Policy and Practice Project, the State Emergency Services Training Framework and the Victorian Information Network for Emergencies (VINE). Other priorities reflect common themes that have emerged from several reports and/or require a whole of government mandate to drive an outcome.

The creation of Emergency Management Victoria and the broad responsibilities of the new Emergency Management Commissioner also require some immediate attention to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place and understood.

The Interim Strategic Action Plan identifies high priority actions that need to be delivered as part of the transition to Emergency Management Victoria. It sets the foundation for priority action in the three-year rolling Strategic Action Plan.

Importantly, work will continue on the scoping and delivery of projects outside the Interim Strategic Action Plan, such as:

- the development of a common doctrine around managing and responding to emergencies that will improve how the sector works together and delivers better community outcomes
- building community resilience
- strengthening emergency management planning arrangements
- common procurement strategies to take advantage of economies of scale and improve interoperability.

## FUTURE LEGISLATION

Legislation to better integrate emergency management planning arrangements will be the second tranche of the Victorian Government's planned legislation program to implement the White Paper, following the passage of the *Emergency Management Act*.

Emergency Management Victoria will lead a project to streamline and rationalise existing emergency management planning arrangements to deliver an integrated and holistic emergency management planning framework. In 2014/15, a review of existing emergency management plans and statutory and administrative planning requirements at state, regional and municipal levels will be undertaken. This review will inform the development of legislation to deliver an integrated emergency management planning framework and remove redundant requirements from legislation. This will lead to an overhaul of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) in 2015/16.

Emergency Management Victoria is undertaking a broad review of emergency management control arrangements, which is likely to result in further legislative changes in 2015/16.





## STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR 2014/15

The interim Strategic Action Plan focuses on strengthening Victoria's emergency management capability under the three key themes of Risk and Resilience, Response and Capability, and Relief and Recovery

### 1. RISK AND RESILIENCE

Building resilience to disasters is recognised worldwide as a significant contributor to a country's ability to anticipate and respond to events that significantly threaten and damage communities, economies and the environment. Resilience can be defined as the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events.<sup>1</sup> The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC) and the Review of the 2010/11 Flood Warnings and Response both acknowledge the importance of shared responsibility – that is, government, local councils, communities and individuals all share responsibility for preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

"Underpinning a disaster resilient community is knowledge and understanding of local disaster risks. We all share responsibility to understand these risks, and how they might affect us. ... By understanding the nature and extent of risks we can seek to control their impacts, and inform the way we prepare for and recover from them."<sup>2</sup>

The VBRC also observed that responsibility is not shared equally:

"Shared responsibility does not mean equal responsibility: in the Commission's view there are some areas in which the State should assume greater responsibility than the community. For example, in most instances state fire authorities will be more capable than individuals when it comes to identifying the risks associated with bushfire; the State should therefore assume a greater responsibility for working to minimise those risks."<sup>3</sup>

Victoria has already undertaken significant work to provide risk information across the state. VicEmergency at [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) is the primary site for fire and flood warnings and shows emergency incidents in Victoria on a real-time Google Map display. The site includes all emergencies including fires, storms, power outages and traffic incidents. Visitors can also access planning and recovery information on fire and flood.

VicSES produces Local Flood Guides for flood-prone communities including maps and information to assist householders in understanding their risk and preparing for floods.

The Department of Justice has published Emergency Risks in Victoria that assesses 15 serious emergency risks at the state level, ranking them in order of severity. At this level, the risk assessment is useful for setting strategic priorities across risks.

<sup>1</sup> Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative 2012 – National Academies Press, Washington D.C.

<sup>2</sup> National Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2011 Council of Australian Governments p.6

<sup>3</sup> 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission Volume II Fire Preparation, Response & Recovery Chapter 9 p.2

### Risk and Resilience Projects and Actions 2014/15

Common Risk Management Policy and Practice	Measure of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a common risk assessment tool and process that aligns with the agreed National Standards</li> </ul>	Priority actions for risk mitigation identified in each emergency management region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a risk assessment (likelihood) utilising the agreed framework for all emergency management regions across Victoria</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a review of the risk mitigation strategies against the assessed risks for all emergency regions across Victoria</li> </ul>	Plans in place by October 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Regional Emergency Management Teams to complete a Risk and Consequence Plan to manage emergency event impacts</li> </ul>	
Community Emergency Management Planning Framework	
Assess the Harrierville Community Planning pilot and finalise the Framework to facilitate Community Emergency Management Plans	Five Community Emergency Management Plans in place
Communities use the Framework to develop their Emergency Management Plans	
Business Continuity Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Security and Resilience Network to provide guidance to departments and agencies via SCRC on business continuity planning best practice to increase preparedness to deal with disruptions</li> </ul>	Guidelines issued to each department and agency

## 2. CAPABILITY AND RESPONSE

A key aim of the White Paper is to improve capability and capacity in the emergency management sector through greater promotion of shared responsibility, risk reduction and networked capability and capacity. The White Paper focused on key initiatives around a state-wide training strategy, common procurement strategies, communication and information management systems, and a review of agreements with the Commonwealth and other agencies to ensure they enable quick deployment of personnel and equipment and explore ways to release capability held within the Victorian public sector.

Since the release of the White Paper in 2012, great progress has been made in improving interoperability across the sector. The new Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre opened in May 2014 and heralds the start of a new unified approach to training across emergency management. The Centre provides state of the art equipment and facilities to meet the training requirements for all emergency services employees and volunteers.

The White Paper identified the need for greater coordination and integration of emergency services organisations and government departments to improve service delivery and achieve the 'all hazards, all agencies' objective. The Respiratory Protection Replacement Program is just one initiative that will realise this objective. Currently CFA, MFB, Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria (AV) use different breathing apparatus. This equipment is critical to personnel being able to perform their duties safely during hazardous incidents. Across the sector, there are approximately 3,100 breathing apparatus of various brands and capability, all of which are coming to the end of their lifecycle. The Respiratory Protection Replacement Program will see the introduction of common equipment across all agencies. Interoperability of respiratory protection equipment will not only result in improved value for money, but also strengthen the effectiveness and efficiencies in emergencies requiring multi-agency attendance, i.e. potential for only one equipment support vehicle in a joint agency incident.

Timely, tailored and relevant information is critical to effective decision-making before, during and after emergencies. Victoria's emergency services have made significant progress in their ability to issue warnings and other information since the 2009 bushfires. Examples include the new FireReady App, the VicEmergency website, the telephone-based warning system known as Emergency Alert, and the growth in emergency broadcasters.

However, there remains considerable scope to improve the gathering, analysis, sharing and dissemination of information to and from the community and within and between agencies. The Victorian Government recognises the need to capitalise and rationalise its substantial investment in emergency communications and information management systems to realise these improvements.

### Capability and Response Projects and Actions 2014/15

State Emergency Services Training Framework	Measure of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a single firefighter recruits course across MFB and CFA</li> </ul>	Increased multi-agency training in common / shared capabilities across the State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One curricula defined and applied for key courses in capabilities required in multiple agencies such as Road Accidents, Urban Search and Rescue, First Aid and Hazmat</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian Emergency Management Training Centres are affordable, accessible to and efficiently used by all agencies, volunteers, departments and local government</li> </ul>	
<b>Volunteer and Employee Workforce Capacity and Capability</b>	The state has a clear understanding of existing capacity and capability and a plan commensurate with existing and future risk, community and government expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the current and future skills and capability needs of the CFA, MFB, VicSES and Life Saving Victoria (LSV) to inform planning and set priorities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the results of this analysis, commence a stocktake by the Volunteer Consultative Forum to complete the Volunteer Strategy, incorporating current capability, known gaps and measures to address those gaps</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot a needs assessment for Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) with a focus on volunteer capacity and capability</li> </ul>	
<b>State Capacity and Capability</b>	Increase in interoperability across agencies and facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Regional Mobile Radio (RMR) network that provides a command channel on a digital network and improves communications irrespective of geographic location for CFA, MFB, VicSES and LSV</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case to extend RMR capability to VicPol, DEPI, and AV</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Respiratory Protection Replacement Program and identify additional opportunities for similar interoperability initiatives</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a sector-wide asset strategy that identifies the current and future equipment and facility needs of the CFA, MFB, VicSES, DEPI (relevant emergency management areas) and ESTA to inform planning and identify opportunities for better utilisation including service co-location opportunities</li> </ul>	

**Capability and Response Projects and Actions 2014/15 – continued ...**

Information Management	Measure of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the first stage of a common operating system across VicPol, AV, DEPI, CFA, MFB and VicSES. This is to include an operating model, data feeds, process flows, governance model and an IT Service Management model. The results of this will inform the next steps and business case for a full common emergency information platform</li> </ul>	<p>Common operating system for all large multi-agency incidents delivers improved decision making for all stakeholders</p>
Operational Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the Regional Mobile Radio (RMR) network that allows common interoperable channels on a digital network, improves radio coverage and delivers agreed operational practices and governance arrangements to utilise an optimal state-wide voice and narrowband network (including redundancy capacity)</li> </ul>	<p>Optimal Voice and Mobile Data Network for all emergency responders</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the extension path to retain the existing Mobile Data Network capability while broadband data requirements are developed</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree and establish a multi-agency managed radio terminal service to procure all future sector radio terminal requirements</li> </ul>	
Communications to the Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the next phase of the national Emergency Alert (EA) program on behalf of all Australian governments</li> </ul>	<p>EA operates on all carriers' 4G networks and is placed on a sustainable long-term footing</p>
Communications from the Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace ESTA's Triple Zero telephony infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Increase capacity to answer Victorian public emergency calls</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that DEPI receives relevant and timely emergency information from ESTA to improve response capabilities, consistent with the services ESTA provides to CFA, MFB and VicSES</li> </ul>	<p>Consistent and effective emergency response</p>

### 3. RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Disaster relief and recovery includes physical, environmental and economic elements, as well as psychosocial well-being. Recovery also provides an opportunity to enhance social, built and natural environments and economies through building the resilience of communities for future emergencies. The provision of relief and recovery to affected communities is provided by a broad range of organisations coordinated at state level.

Over the last few years, improvements in the delivery of relief and recovery have been implemented including the provision of information in the Emergency Relief Handbook: A planning guide 2013 developed by the Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross.

A series of reviews of emergency events have recognised the fragmentation of recovery efforts. Bringing recovery coordination under the responsibilities of the Emergency Management Commissioner is aimed at addressing this issue; however, transfer of this responsibility will not occur until 1 July 2015. During the transitional period up to 1 July 2015 the recovery coordination function will be delegated to the Department of Human Services.

#### Relief and Recovery Projects and Actions 2014/15

Impact Assessment	Measure of Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the current model for impact assessment, initial through to final</li> <li>Identify opportunities for improvement to arrangements and implement opportunities to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness</li> <li>Define a common method/system to capture information including data definition categories</li> <li>Communicate, train and promote the impact assessment arrangements</li> <li>Review Victoria's involvement in (or application of) the National Impact Assessment Model</li> </ul>	New impact assessment model in place by June 2015 that better informs recovery planning, reduces duplication of effort, and provides better outcomes for the community		
<b>Relief and Recovery Model (incorporating social, economic and environmental outreach models)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise the transition arrangements for relief and recovery coordination moving to Emergency Management Victoria</li> <li>Review the whole of government state emergency relief and recovery model</li> <li>Deliver a community outreach model to ensure consistency of approach in the delivery of community relief and recovery services</li> <li>Facilitate discussions across government regarding the future engagement with the Commonwealth in National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) negotiations and the policy and implementation process of the National Disaster Financial Assistance for Councils and Catchment Management Authorities</li> </ul>		New relief and recovery model implemented and operational by 1 July 2015	
<b>Communicating with Communities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the model for communication with disaster-affected communities</li> </ul>			New communication model implemented

### Accessibility

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